COLLECTORS' CORNER #69 FEBRUARY 6, 1976
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THE ORIENTALIA COLLECTORS' FAVORITE

ANNCR: AND NOW COLLECTORS' CORNER ... THE VOICE OF AMERICA SERIES OF PROGRAMS FOR LISTENERS WHO COLLECT THINGS -- WHETHER THEY BE STAMPS OR COINS, SNUFF BOTTLES OR OLD AUTOS, OR MERELY BALLS OF STRING. HERE IS _____ WITH THE STORY OF THE TINY ITEM THAT HAS LONGED REIGNED AS THE FAVORITE OF THOSE COLLECTORS WHO SPECIALIZE IN ORIENTALIA ... THINGS FROM THE FAR EAST.

NARR: THE SMALL, BUT EXTREMELY VALUABLE OBJECT IS THE SNUFF BOTTLE. SNUFF WAS INTRODUCED TO CHINA DURING THE CHING DYNASTY FOUR CENTURIES AGO. EUROPEAN MERCHANTS BROUGHT ALONG THE AROMATIC POWDERED TOBACCO WHICH THEY CALLED SNUFF, PROBABLY BECAUSE IT WAS SNIFFED RATHER THAN SMOKED. ARISTOCRATIC CHINESE TOOK TO THE SNUFF HABIT QUICKLY. BUT THE LONG FINGERNAILS WHICH WERE TRADITIONAL WITH THE HIGHER-CLASS CHINESE MADE SNIFFING THE SNUFF INTO A NOSTRIL EXCEEDINGLY DIFFICULT. THE CHINESE BEGAN CARRYING THEIR SNUFF IN SMALL BOTTLES WITH A SMALL SPOON ATTACHED TO THE STOPPER. THE SNUFF WAS INHALED DIRECTLY FROM THE SPOON AND THE TIGHT STOPPER HELPED RETAIN THE AROMA AND KEEP MOISTURE AWAY.

THE TINY SNUFF BOTTLES BECAME SO POPULAR IN CHINA THAT BY THE MIDDLE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY THEY HAD BECOME STATUS SYMBOLS, INDICATORS OF A MAN'S SOCIAL STANDING. NOBLEMEN SPENT UNBELIEVABLY LARGE SUMS FOR SNUFF BOTTLES CARVED FROM JADE OR IVORY AND DECORATED WITH EMERALDS,

NARR: (CONT) RUBIES AND SAPPHIRES. ARTISTS WERE COMMISSIONED TO PAINT LANDSCAPES INSIDE SOME GLASS BOTTLES, WORKING WITH TINY BRUSHES THROUGH OPENINGS SMALLER THAN A MAN'S LITTLE FINGER. THE SNUFF BOTTLES BECAME AN ART FORM UNIQUE TO CHINA AND IN RECENT YEARS THE PRIDE OF COLLECTORS OF ORIENTALIA. ONE SNUFF BOTTLE COLLECTOR IN HONG KONG VALUES HIS SNUFF BOTTLES AT WELL OVER ONE QUARTER OF A MILLION DOLLARS. PRICES FOR SOME OF THE MORE DISTINCTIVE BOTTLES HAVE INCREASED MORE THAN ONE-HUNDRED-FOLD IN THE PAST FEW YEARS. SNUFF BOTTLES ARE ALWAYS A BIG PART OF THE ANTIQUE SHOW HELD IN NEW YORK EACH YEAR (AND CURRENTLY UNDERWAY). ONE ESPECIALLY FINE SNUFF BOTTLE HAS BEEN SOLD THERE IN EACH OF THE LAST TEN ANNUAL SHOWS ... AND AT A PRICE THAT HAS DOUBLED EACH YEAR.

THE SCORES OF SECURITY PEOPLE AT THE SITE OF THE ANTIQUE SHOW IN NEW YORK DEMONSTRATE THE VALUE OF THE TINY SNUFF BOTTLES AND OTHER ANTIQUES. PEOPLE WHO LIKE CHINESE ART ALL SEEM ESPECIALLY FOND OF THE JADE OR IVORY SNUFF BOTTLES. ONE WEALTHY HONG KONG COLLECTOR OF SNUFF BOTTLES SAYS "THIS IS A FINE INVESTMENT ANY WAY YOU LOOK AT IT. THIS HOBBY HAS A ROMANTIC SIDE TO IT THAT HAS SORT OF TAKEN ME OVER."

ANNCR: THE STORY OF THE SNUFF BOTTLE, FAVORITE COLLECTIBLE OF LOVERS OF ORIENTALIA. THIS HAS BEEN <u>COLLECTORS' CORNER</u>.. NOTES ON THE WORLD OF COLLECTORS WHO BUY, SELL AND, ABOVE ALL, TREASURE THINGS FROM STAMPS TO STRING, FROM BIG OLD

ANNCR: (CONT) CARS TO TINY SNUFF BOTTLES. NEXT WEEK (AT THIS TIME) ANOTHER LOOK INTO THE COLLECTORS' CORNER. THIS IS _____.

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